

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY
NEWS RELEASE**

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**ANNUAL ARBITRATION & LABOR RELATIONS CONFERENCE
SET FOR SEPTEMBER 23-24, 2004**

Helena - March 30, 2004 - The 25th annual Arbitration and Labor Relations Conference will be held on September 23 and 24, 2004, at the GranTree Inn in Bozeman. The conference provides a forum for everyone in the labor relations arena to meet to exchange information and learn from one another, as well as from practitioners throughout the labor relations community. In order to give practitioners an opportunity to further participate in the labor relations process, the Montana Board of Personnel Appeals will conduct its regular September meeting directly following the conference on Friday afternoon.

The conference program includes:

- Keynote Speaker Barry Bluestone is the Stearns Trustee Professor of Political Economy and director of the Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. As part of his work, Bluestone spends a considerable amount of time consulting with trade unions, with industry groups, and with various federal and state government agencies.
- Several well-respected members of the economic community in Montana have been invited to respond to the keynote: Rep. Pat Williams in the U.S. Congress from 1979 to 1997. Professor Paul E. Polzin is director of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research and Professor in the Department of Management, University of Montana, Missoula. David Hoffman is manager of External Affairs for PPL Western Operations at PPL Montana, LLC, in Helena.
- Concurrent sessions will be offered regarding negotiations in practice, workplace mediation, and reinstatement remedies for wrongful discharge in various labor systems. Presenters from the Billings and Helena School Districts will discuss negotiation methods each used in bargaining their last contracts. FMCS Commissioner Ted Handel will present a session on workplace mediation. Yaron Catane, legal advisor to the Labor Court in Jerusalem, Israel, will join Montana's LeRoy Schramm to bring together the European, Montana and Israeli perspectives concerning reinstatement remedies for wrongful discharge.
- Karl Englund and LeRoy Schramm will address Montana employment law developments, while representatives of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) will provide updates from their agencies.
- Nationally recognized arbitrator Jack Flagler will return and again present a program on the fundamentals of arbitration.
- A panel of representatives from the Montana Board of Personnel Appeals (BOPA) and the NLRB will discuss the similarities and differences between the public and private boards following concurrent sessions about the fundamentals of each act. John Andrew, Labor Standards Bureau Chief and Catherine Roth, an agent of the NLRB, will present these concurrent sessions.

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- Disciplinary action for off-duty conduct as well as drug and/or alcohol use as it relates to the work place will be discussed by experienced labor and management representatives. This topic will culminate in the Red Light/Green Light session, where a panel of four arbitrators will hear grievances based upon these presentations and individually set out the analysis used prior to giving a decision on each case.

The entire agenda for the conference is available at the new conference home page, www.mtlaborrelationsconf.com. This page provides links to the agenda, presenter biographical information, and on-line pre-registration for the conference.

The conference is sponsored by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Board of Personnel Appeals, Montana Arbitration Association, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, and the National Labor Relations Board.